

820004-1708



LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 500 - Diplomacia Baghdad, June 27, 1935.

Subject: Movements of Dr. Herman F. Erben
while in Iraq.

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TEHERAN

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7-29-35

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AUG 9 1935

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUL 29 1935
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Division of
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
JUL 31 1935
Department of State

FILED
AUG - 4 1935

Sir:

I have the honor to report on the movements of
Dr. Herman F. Erben who has recently been in Iraq, and
who has been the subject of correspondence on the part
of the Department. There are attached copies of two
memoranda which describe in some detail the actions
of Dr. Erben during this period. It may be added that
the first of these memoranda was presented to the
Ministry for Foreign Affairs with a note drawing its
attention to the presence of Dr. Erben here, and request-
ing to be informed of his movement. What subsequently
transpired is taken up in the second memorandum.

Upon

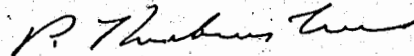
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130 - E BEN
ERBEN, HERMANN FREDERICK
THEODORE

Upon being notified of the impending departure of Dr. Erben a telegram was sent to the Legation at Teheran dated June 20, 1935, informing that Legation that he was probably en route to Teheran. It is believed that Dr. Erben effected an entry into Iran as nothing further has been heard locally of his whereabouts.

Dr. Erben desired to secure an American passport from the Legation but was informed that one could be given to him only for direct travel to the United States. It seems to be his hope to receive a passport when he reaches a point further East which will make most direct travel to the United States by the Eastern route.

Respectfully yours,

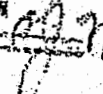


P. Knabenshue.

✓
Enclosures:

1/2 memoranda

File No. 130
SGS/jnc.

2 Carbon Copies
Received 

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Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 500 - Diplomatic -
of June 27, 1935, from American Legation, Baghdad, Iraq.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM

Dr. Hermann F. Erben, a naturalized American citizen,
(former Austrian) bearer of Seaman's Protection Certificate
No. 5290, dated November 15, 1930, issued at San Francisco.

He arrived here in company with two Austrians constituting the "Austro-American Trans-Asia Expedition." He indicates that his party travelled along the pipe-line as guests of the Iraq Petroleum Company and entered Iraq via Haditha. He adds that he entered here without a visa, having mentioned as references the names of some prominent local residents including Dr. Faik Shaker and Dr. Max Makovsky. He also says that he entered Palestine by virtue of his American seaman's certificate, having paid a nominal fee or fine because he came into the country as a ship's passenger rather than as a working seaman.

He declares that his connection with the "Expedition" is ended. He states that in consequence he now intends to return to the United States via Syria (Beirut, port of embarkation), and that he contemplates making this trip with his seaman's certificate alone, without a passport.

American Legation,
Baghdad, June 7, 1935.

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Enclosure No. 2 to despatch No. 500 - Diplomatic -
of June 27, 1935, from American Legation, Baghdad, Iraq.

MEMORANDUM.

On June 17th, Dr. Erben and the two Austrians called at this office (Dr. Erben had a letter awaiting him). It appears that he and the Austrians had rejoined hands and reformed their expedition. Dr. Erben stated that he and the Austrians had left the Ambassadors Hotel and was living with Dr. Makofsky. Dr. Erben also indicated that he had inquired of the Saudi Arabia Legation concerning travel there and had been advised that it was safe but appeared to have his doubts. Furthermore, he seemed to be concerned about getting a visa to Saudi Arabia.

On June 18th I called at the Foreign Ministry and talked to Gailani. Previously the Iranian Consulate had been telephoned and set forth that Dr. Erben and his friends had called there inquiring about visas but did not make application therefor. This I passed on to Gailani as well as the information from Dr. Erben and other sources (including the German Minister, Dr. Grobba) that he expected to leave for Teheran on that same day. Gailani got in touch with the Ministry of Interior and ascertained over the telephone the following: The police authorities knew of Erben's movements and were aware that he was on the point of going to Iran. Dr. Erben had entered the country illegally and the police Inspector responsible for admitting him without a visa was being investigated with a view to punishment. If Dr. Erben should effect an entry into Iran this would constitute his voluntary departure from Iraq and nothing would be

done

done up to that point but if after crossing the Iraq frontier he was forced back by refusal of entry into Iran he would then be seized because of his illegal presence in this country and steps taken towards deportation. The frontier authorities were being notified of Dr. Erben's movements and of the steps to be taken.

Several days later Gailani telephoned me and inquired about the use of seamen's certificates. He was told that they did not take the place of passports for ordinary travel purposes, as in the case of Dr. Erben who made no serious pretense of traveling in the capacity of a seaman on maritime affairs. From what Gailani said it appears that Dr. Erben got into Iran. Nothing more has been heard about him since then.

June 25, 1935.
SGS/jnc.

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(copy)

Jerusalem,
8th June 1935.

A.S.P. "G.A."
C.I.D.

Subject:- Doctor Herman Fredrik Erben
Ref. :- C 159/4/412

I have to report that I have made enquiries regarding the above mentioned whilst in Jerusalem. Dr. Herman Erben arrived Jerusalem on 6-5-35 and left on 30-5-35. During this period he stayed at the Austrian Hospice, Old City, and the Casa Nova. I am informed that Dr. Erben and party left for Baghdad via Amman on 30-5-35. Whilst in Jerusalem Dr. Erben made acquaintance with a certain Arab teacher of the Rawdat El Ma'aref school namely Ali Eff. El Oury. Dr. Erben visited Rawdat El Ma'aref School taking it to be the Moslem Supreme Council and in this way made acquaintance with Ali. Effendi. Ali Effendi showed Dr. Erben and his party around Jerusalem for several days during his spare time.

Dr. Erben was accompanied by two friends from Vienna namely 1. Maximilian Reisch 2. Helmuth Hachman. Maximilian had in his possession a letter of recommendation from the Chancellor of the Catholic Archbishop of Vienna dated 7th of July 1932. Helmuth was described in his passport as a "volunteer" born in Vienna on the 18th-9-1915, address Wuerthgasse No. 1 Vienna XIX. Dr. Erben was described as a representing the "Austro-American Trans Asia Expedition, San Francisco, California, U.S.A." The three persons did not pay the Austrian Hospice but lived on charity. The party had lunch at Notre Dame de France one day but did not live there. During a conversation with Ali Eff. El Oury in Jerusalem Dr. Erben stated that he had a sister in Vienna who was intending to marry an Iraqi from the family of Tuma. The family of Tuma may be originally from Syria or Palestine but residing in Baghdad and a member of their family is studying

in Vienna. The latter is the person Dr. Erben's sister intends marrying, therefore Dr. Erben was anxious to know something about the family. He asked Ali Effendi to give him some references in Baghdad in order that he might find out about the Tuma family. Ali Effendi gave him reference Dr. Shani Osaran, Baghdad, . Dr. Erben will most probably visit Dr. Shani in Baghdad. The car of the party belongs to one of the two friends accompanying Dr. Erben, and a guarantee of LP.60 was left at Haifa with the Customs on arriving Palestine. Ali Effendi and his friends inform me that Dr. Erben and his party arouse suspicion; so did the Bishop of the Austrian Hospice. (The car of this party was under repair in Tel-Aviv for about a week and the car when driven flies an American and an Austrian flag. I have been able to obtain a negative of a film bearing the photo of Dr. Erben and I attach photo of Dr. Erben for identification when required.)

For your information please.

(signed) L Robinson

C.I.D.

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